

Running Head: The International and Domestic Similarities of Drug Trafficking

The International and Domestic Similarities of Drug Trafficking

MSG Angelo Lindsey

United States Army Sergeant's Major Academy

Class # 58

SGM Jose E. Rogers

28 November 2007

TSP561 Haines Paper Final Thesis
Individual (MSG Lindsey, Angelo)

Topic: The International and Domestic Similarities of Drug Trafficking

Thesis:

Even though the military are providing troops to combat the War on Drugs, the traffic of Illegal drugs are increasing internationally since the Global War on Terror started.

Outline:

- I. Threaten borders posed by Drug Traffic
 - A. International Drug Strategy
 - B. International Cost
 - C. Problems caused by drug use
- II. International Strategy
 - A. Flawed U.S. Strategy
 - B. Afghanistan, Colombia, and Peru
- III. Results of not adopting proposal on International Policy
 - A. Current U.S. Policies
 - B. Conclusion

Abstract

The military has fought the “Drug War” for nearly 40 years. It started because of the epidemic drug use of the 1970’s across the country. This paper will show that the United States is no better off today than they were 35 years ago. The military standard to measure success is effects based results, which according to the military’s risk vs. reward concept the Drug War’s results are a failure. America is paying a heavy price because of the effects of illicit drug use in America and America’s policy on drug eradication may actually increase international community’s support for terrorism. There is a counter argument on the positive effects and finally a section on current and future strategies for the military in the War on Drugs.

The International and Domestic Similarities of Drug Trafficking

The American military is providing troops to combat the War on Drugs for the last 40 years. However, the trafficking of illegal drugs is increasing internationally and domestically since the Global War on Terror began. The War on Drugs became a focus during the Nixon administration and was re-energized during the Reagan administration. Drugs once again, became an epidemic during George Bush's term as President. It was President Bush who declared the modern day war on drugs, and he announced the first National Drug Control Strategy. During that time frame, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney designated the detection, interdiction, production, trafficking, and the use of illegal drugs as a high priority of national security and as a mission for the Department of Defense. The President's 1989 National Drug Control Strategy would require resources and funding be shift to the military and away from domestic agencies. The President made it clear that the nation's security was in jeopardy, so he thought it was logical to wage an international war on drugs that would lead to the national objective of a drug free society. The military would now go after source countries that supplied the drugs and their trafficking networks. They would do this through a concept of interdiction and eradication (Gleason, 1993, p 4).

International Drug Strategy

For close to two decades this concept has made minimal gains on drug trafficking internationally. Illegal drugs continue to enter the United States and saturate American communities and streets, especially in the inner city. Although the usage levels have somewhat stabilized in the last two years, the overall supply and availability of illegal drugs is increasing and remains relatively constant and high. The nation's borders are more at risk now than they

were 20 years ago, because the military's role in combating drugs shows little to no effect on reducing the traffic of illicit drugs across our national borders, which include Mexico, Canada, and the Gulf Coast Region.

In 1989, President Bush sent troops to Panama to interdict the production and transport of illicit drugs to the United States. Almost twenty years later the transport and sales of illicit drugs from Central America continues to increase. The U.S. government has sent advisors to Mexico and Canada to train their Soldiers on drug interdiction and eradication. In addition, the U.S. military is training border patrol agents and the National Guard on these same procedures. However, the training, funding, and the hiring of additional border patrol agents has made little or no effect on ending or decreasing the trafficking of illegal drugs coming through Canada and Mexico in the last 10 years. The policy of interdiction and eradication in Mexico to end the production and trafficking of illicit drugs has inadvertently made things worse for the local populace. A lot of those people depend on the production and sale of drugs for survival in their daily lives. Additionally, their local economies lack development and it is hard for them to find honest good paying jobs to support their families. Many of these people are in low income areas that are becoming a breeding ground for anti-American resentment.

International Cost

Internationally, if people continue to use illegal drugs it will cost governments billions of dollars associated with absenteeism, medical expenses, and inefficiencies. Due to this expanding threat, national costs associated with the drug abuse problem will increase by many billions of dollars each year as more people become addicted. According to the annual National Drug Control Strategy report back in 1989, it showed numerous measures that would support our

counter-narcotics strategy. The most important one being is for the government to have a unity of effort with other international governments in conducting counter-narcotic operations.

However, the U.S. did not follow this recommendation instead it continued a national strategy that focuses on the supply of drugs coming from source countries. In most countries where drugs are produced, source countries recognize that eradication has the lowest potential for success in alleviating the international drug problem. Additionally, if the U.S. wanted them to support this flawed policy, they would have to provide source countries with additional funding. Without a major economic investment in their local economies, source countries would have no choice but to continue to produce and sell illicit drugs to support their impoverished people. This reliance on the drug economy will only lead these underdeveloped sectors of society to a doomed cycle of dependence. Studies show that most drug users will come into contact with illicit drugs by the age of six. Many dealers start utilizing children to transport and traffic illicit drugs in most countries. This problem is found domestically and internationally in low-income neighborhoods, and cities. Most parents in those neighborhoods are dependent on the illicit drug trade for a source of income.

Problems caused by Illicit Drugs

Illegal drug use is a health problem that causes death, harmful behaviors, and many economic and social problems throughout the world. The current strategy on drugs is failing. The military is in the middle of a drug war internationally that it is not winning. The United States is not decreasing the traffic of illicit drugs into the U.S. and the policy of eradication is not lowering the amount of drugs being grown internationally. Subsequently, this policy has created new adversaries opposed to American strategy and objectives in the world. The drug war budget

increased astronomically over the last 15 years with no real effect or desirable results. Most illegal drugs will continue to flow across U.S. borders, and other borders of the world untouched. Billions of drug money goes unseen by domestic and international law enforcement and government agencies.

Flawed U.S. Strategy

The U.S. government has not only applied this failing strategy internationally but they pressure new countries, like Afghanistan, to adopt the same flawed strategy. The policy of eradication insures the criminalization of the poor in other countries. If they are not involved with the production of illicit drugs then the poor are enticed to assist in the trafficking of the product. This is the reason for the outbreak of all the armed groups that are associated with the drug trade and are referred to as Narco-terrorists. The question remains is it the U.S. policy that has pushed them to this? If so then we created a problem potentially worse than the drug industry and in the process we have not stopped the drug flow into America. Is that better national security?

Afghanistan, Colombia, and Peru

By going after countries like Afghanistan, Colombia, and Peru, that are the leading producers of illicit drugs, the U.S. thinks it can interdict and stop the transport of drugs coming out of those countries. Terrorist groups in Afghanistan receive funds from the traffic of illicit drugs. They use drugs as a main source for funding terrorist groups like Al Qaeda, and the Taliban (Feickert, 2005). These countries have drug resources in massive quantities. This contributes to the \$400 billion world illicit drug industry. Afghanistan poses an international threat to the world as it continues to produce, and traffic illicit drugs. Colombia is another major

adversary for the war on drugs. Colombia is a large producer of illicit drugs, especially cocaine. Over the last five to eight years cocaine availability still remains strong in the world. Moreover, new drugs like crack cocaine, methamphetamines, LSD and heroin have become popular internationally. Today cocaine production and use is on the rise and Colombia continues to be the major supplier of cocaine internationally.

Colombia has a plentiful supply of cocaine and various guerilla organizations benefit from the production and trafficking of this illicit drug. Peru also has guerrilla organizations that earn up to \$100 million per year from the traffic of illicit drugs throughout the world as stated by (Carpenter, & Vasquez, 2004). However, the U.S. policy of interdiction and eradication has had minimal success in slowing Columbia's and Peru's cocaine production. Trying to interdict or eradicate drugs from these countries is a failure on our part. The supply reduction campaign is ineffective at reducing the availability of illegal drugs because law enforcement agencies only seize 15 percent of drug imports (Carpenter, & Vasquez, 2004). Most traffickers will use other means such as new routes and innovations to smuggle illegal drugs.

Current U.S. Policies

The U.S. continues to use a strategy that focuses on drug producing countries; however it cannot put enough Soldiers in the field to eradicate drug production. Drug policies like that have only rearranged the map of illicit drug trade. Furthermore, the use of the military in these operations puts Soldier's in direct contact with the drug trade and many Soldiers are put into ethical dilemmas. There have been cases of U.S. Soldiers taking bribes from drug traffickers on the U.S. and Mexican border and some Soldiers have been caught transporting illicit drugs in government vehicles and planes. During the Vietnam War, many military personnel were heavy

in the use and transport of illicit drugs. The military should not make the same mistake again by utilizing the military personnel entirely to fight the war on drugs.

The import of illicit drugs internationally has had a negative impact on America's national security objectives. The military strategy of interdiction and eradication unconstructively influences America's stature in the world. In addition, there is a growing anti-Americanism attitude which is impeding America's ability to spread democracy around the world. Drugs will continue to be transported from countries that have under-developed economies. Most people in those countries have been growing and producing illicit drugs for decades and it is a way of life for them. The current U.S. policy pushes these people to support terrorist groups that are willing to protect their livelihood. Furthermore, this policy hampers the military's effort in fighting the GWOT by making commanders develop strategies that are contrary to the principles of counter insurgency operations. The current strategy is flawed because the government has not sealed the borders, deployed enough soldiers to eradicate drug production, and coordinated internationally with the world community on an effective international strategy. The military hasn't and can't make a meaningful difference because it has its hands full with fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

Conclusion

Even though the military is providing troops to combat the War on Drugs, the trafficking of illegal drugs is increasing internationally since the Global War on Terror started. The fight for security and international control will be ineffective if other countries are not willing to combat the production, market, and trafficking of illegal drugs across international borders. America does not have the resources to conduct both the GWOT and the international War on Drugs.

References

- Feickert, A. (2005). *“U.S. military operations in the global war on terrorism: Afghanistan, africa, the philippines, and colombia.”* CRS Report for Congress. Congressional Research Service. In The Library of Congress (Ed.), Congressional Research Service.
- Carpenter, T. (2004). *How the drug war in Afghanistan undermines America’s war on terror.* CATO Institute. Foreign Policy Briefing No, 84.
- Felbab-Brown, V. (2006, January 1). A Better Strategy Against Narco-Terrorism. *MIT Center for International Studies, 06-02.* Retrieved October 20, 2007 from <http://www.alternet.org/audits/31515/>
- Gleason, P. (1993). The War on Drugs, Unending LIC or Attainable Security. Global Security. Retrieved October 20, 2007 from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1993/GPB.htm>
- Reports,* (p.1-14). Retrieved October 11, 2007 from <http://www.drcnet.org/military/>